American Women Missionaries and Pioneers Collection

Part 1: Missionaries

The Esther Morse Papers, 1921 – 1965

Series I a

Outgoing Typed Letters

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That would make it about $3,25 for the 6 feet, in American money--or about $1.38 per yard. It is typical of all silk material and the price is representative, too.

Must say Adios. My love to all of you.

Yours--
Esther Morse

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Kachek, Hainan
December 14,1930

Dear A. C. and Dad:

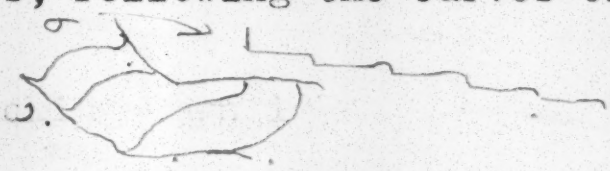
Methinks I have two letters from A. C. as yet unanswered and it behooves me not to wait longer. I can think of one question he asked that I want especially to answer--'if you have a Mountain to look at in spare moments?' Yes--only it can't be seen from my room for the trees around the house shut off the view. But from the hospital the view is lovely--especially in the mornings. I have tried to get pictures of it but so far haven't had any luck. However, I will keep on trying. I can see that my kodak is going to be an expense to me!!

The enclosed snaps were taken about a month ago. In the group, the visiting people from America are Dr. Veach and Dr. Scott. Dr. Crawford has been 30 years in Soochow, China. (The Dr. in the names above is D. D., not M. D!) Mr. Wells is Chairman of the China Council--resides in Shanghai. He is a perfect peach of a man. Dr. Bercovitz and Mr. Steiner are from Hoihow compound. Dr. B. is of Hebrew extraction--his father is a Christian Jew who was a missionary, also, and Dr. B. has a brother who is a missionary M. D. in Korea. He is very interesting because of the mixture of traits in him--typically Jewish in some ways and a Christian idealist thro' and thro' I admire his energy and ideals tremendously but he irritates me greatly at times by his lack of attention to detail. Mr. Steiner is Swiss, was born in Switzerland of German parents. His wife is French. He is a wonderfully fine linguist, speaking not only French and German, but Hainanese, Mandarin, Cantonese, Hak-ka and some of the dialects of the interior tribes. It has been said of him by Chinese that he speaks enough like them that unless they see him they cannot tell it is a foreigner speaking. Dr. James Chu is an exceptional Chinese. I've mentioned him before I'm sure. He had his first training here in Kachek and was then sent to Yale-in-China and to Peking for his medical work. He now runs a hospital in Hoihow and does admirable work. He speaks quite good English--tho' with an accent and is quite accustomed to English ways. When he comes down here we never think of putting him in a Chinese home but always entertain him in our homes. He is one of those individuals who can laugh at his own mistakes and recount them for the enjoyment and laughter of others--a rather rare quality, I believe.

The French's are quite crazy about the Thomas kiddies

and whenever Dickie is around Mrs. F. has him, and Bobs sticks to A. E. like a burr so they are all in the picture, too. As you see my shadow is no less--172½# yesterday!!

For some time folks here have been talking of taking a trip to Hoihow. It was decided that Miss Moninger, Mr. and Mrs. French and myself should go on Thursday past. We had heard that bandits had been more active in certain areas and were advised to go a certain way rather than the old way out. We did so and had a very uneventful trip, making it in 3½ hours--71 miles. This way is thro' a different type of country than the regular road--hills for much of the first part of the trip and then low plains which were good to see. There is more farming done along this road too, and it was most interesting to see the terracing in the valleys, following the curves of the valley and the slope of the land as one saw it directly or in profile view. When up on the hills and looking down in the valleys--the terracing with its varied patches and varied kinds of green was a patchwork quilt, a crazy quilt, done mostly in greens and tans--and lovely to look upon! Had we had the time I'd have liked to have tried a snapshot of it.



Arrived in Hoihow we had a very good time and they tried to keep us until Monday because of rumors that bandits had burned one bridge we had crossed in coming down. We had promised to be back on Saturday tho' and so insisted we must come. However, we tried a ferry much farther down the river, crossed safely and found good roads all the way in to Kachek. Were stopped once by suspicious-looking individuals but were detained only a minute or two, and the rest of the way was uneventful save for a 'blow-out'! Was awfully glad to be here again--visiting isn't my forte, I guess, and I'm tired as can be for the three day spree! More soldiers are arriving from Canton, we are told, so the bandits will probably take to cover again. There may even be some fighting but it won't affect us so long as we stay off the road! So don't be alarmed by any news you may read about warfare in Hainan--it will be an effort to eliminate the banditry which is really quite prevalent.

There are no bridges across the largest rivers--ferries being in use. The ferry we crossed on Thursday is a man-power ferry--we were poled across the river by eight men. The river is very low and shallow and narrow now, and after we got off the ferry there was a long stretch of sand to negotiate. Part of the way a corduroy road had been laid over the sand and it was a blessing. I doubt if we could have made it without that help.

Coming back we ferried 'way down river and there they had a motor ferry to get us across. It's fun to watch the junks on the river. Yesterday there was wind enough to take them up river but when there is no wind a rope or two is attached to the upper part of the mast and several men on shore bend their backs to the task of pulling the junk up-stream. It is a bitter kind of toil, all right--and a very slow means of transportation, as you may imagine.

It is raining today--quite steadily, a fine downpour--with very little wind. We are hoping it keeps up for some days--the rice fields are still far too dry for planting. My hopes are with the farmers ever, you see!

You'd be interested in the carpentry here, Dad. They do lovely work but every speck by hand. My wardrobe was made out of a board six feet long and three and a half inches think--the only board they had of that particular wood. They sawed the boards out with hand saws and planed and smoothed it all by hand and dove-tailed the boards together. It looks slow the way they do it but they do accomplish a lot. I saw the carpenter plane a board one day. He braced it at one end and then held it between his feet and it was as firm as if in a vise. I marvel at the way they use their feet to help them.

Please give my greetings to the Glabais. Am sorry he has been ill and hope he has recovered now--and will have no further trouble.

'Tis time to go to church. Must say adios. My love to all of you. Yours ever--

Esther Morse

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Kachek, Hainan
December 21, 1930

Dear Dad:

This is almost too warm a day to sit down to letter-writing! In fact it is so warm that everyone is predicting a storm, and a rain would be most welcome. The farmers have not enough water yet for the rice planting and even our lawns and gardens are dry.

Miss Moninger and I had dinner with the Thomas family today. We have been interchanging Sunday invitations because it frees one cook to go to church each Sunday.

None of our servants are Christians. Our cook comes from a village which holds fast the old ways, most tenaciously and a foreigner is unwelcome in their village unless he is invited in by some member of the village. But he goes to the service on his Sunday off and does try to observe the restrictions we place on Sabbath work. Our coolie had a Christian father and has worked for one of the Chinese pastors and has had every opportunity to learn the doctrine, but is reticent about himself and probably has not been baptized, tho' so far Miss Moninger hasn't found out for sure. He sort of evades church attendance but does attend morning prayers here on the compound each day. Our washwoman has Christian connections in the family she married into but is not herself a believer. She attends church regularly and goes to classes in the evenings, said classes conducted by the Bible woman of the compound, and is learning the Lord's Prayer and some hymns now. Perhaps, in time-----

An occasion of interest this week was the feast celebrating the betrothal of our midwife and the head hospital assistant. The feast was a mixture of old and new customs. Gifts were exchanged and the middle people were given gifts, too. I think there was little need for middle prople in this case for it seems to be a love affair and both parties are of an age to decide for themselves, but they did not want any question to arise regarding their relations until a proper announcement could be made, so all arrangements were made by people who knew both parties. It seems to be a very satisfactory match as far as the Chinese and foreigners alike can see and everyone is very happy over it. The feast was a small one but a very nice one. The pastor of the local church and one of the 'middle people' made the announcement of the betrothal, prefacing it with a prayer, and grace was said before the feast, so all was done that could be to give and indicate the sanction of the church and of the Christian people here. Tsè Fang--the girl--is a very devoted Christian, of the mystic type. Zông Hòa is Christian, also, and of exemplary habits, tho' not as earnest in his profession as Tsè Fang, probably. But it is all a very happy situation, we believe.

Plans go on apace for Christmas. There will be a service at 10 AM on Christmas Day. Christmas eve we will have our Christmas dinner at the Thomases. There are so many things on Thursday we can't have it then--the service, a wedding, and a feast! On Christmas morning we will all have our gifts together, probably.

Had the first letter from Ruth yesterday and was most happy over it.

Someone asked about sending me anything and what the duty would be. It will be at least 20% ad valorem and may be more. That isn't a tremendous amount, it's true, but if the value is very much it will count up. In like manner, it's worse if I try to send you anything for the U. S. charges 80% duty and places its own valuation often. That is, I may say an article costs $5.00 gold. You would have to pay 80% of my valuation, if the customs authorities accepted it, but they might say the articles were worth $7.00, say, and charge you 80% of that. So it isn't easy to send articles either direction, but I may ask for some things sometime anyway!

I sent for a Missionaries Diary to Shanghai and received it the other day. It is the regular kind in use for years by folks out here, has English and Chinese calendars in it--dates of all the special Anglican church days with page for accounts, letters received and sent, books read, etc. etc. Think it will be a handy book to have. My fine year diary is exhausted with this year.

The gardens are doing well--had beans and lettuce at dinner today at Thomases and yesterday Mrs Thomas canned some beans. There is a season later on when gardens aren't so good and canned goods are handy to have then. Am looking forward to ripe tomatoes--there are nice green ones set on now.

I was making a map of Hainan to send to the Oil City S. S. and from it as a basis I was heping to send bits of history,

geography, etc. that might be interesting. I've been at the map a long while and haven't time to finish it without taking time from other work--you'd be surprised how many things they find for a language student to do! Three or four hours with the teacher and at least two more in preparation for the next day and about three hours for meals and eight for sleep only leaves seven hours for other things and Miss Moninger is always thinking up this or that to do so its a lucky day when I have three hours I can call my own. I'm not meaning to crab, but the days are awfully full.

The weather is the sort that things mold very easily--anything of leather soon has long whiskers. I wipe off my suitcases and shoes every week and now my books are beginning to show up white spots here and there. I put some magazines down on my trunk a few days ago. This AM I noticed the trunk cover was spotted with mold where they had laid (or is it lain?) Am told that in time things get dry enough that they will no longer mold so guess its a matter of waiting and--wiping. Glass over pictures gets spotty,too. Just one of the vicissitudes of the climate, I guess!

Aha! 'tis getting dark and overcast. Perhaps the storm is even now advancing.' It's coming from the north west, according to the clouds but they may swing to the north east--the 'wet' quarter in this land.

Prepare yourselves for a shock! I'm going to buy a car! There! I've actually put it on paper. But I'm fairly serious--I am considering it. We are here in the interior and must depend on someone else for transportation here and yon. I don't like it not to be able to go when and as I choose. It wouldn't be wise to go anywhere until the language is acquired but once that is done I really do mean to get a second hand Ford in Hongkong next summer--if I can save enough money! Always that if!

Well--Adios. My love to you.

yours--

Esther Morse

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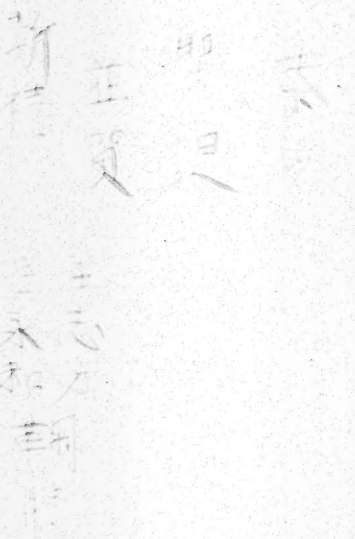
Kachek, Hainan
December 28, 1930

Dear All:

This has been a fuller and busier week than was anticipated emen. Last Sunday when I wrote it was warm and pretty. By Monday morning a pouring rain was is progress and continued thro' out the day. Tuesday was misty and rainy by spells--and cooler. Wednesday was cold--the thermometer was 56°!--but there was a stiffish wind and some rain. Thursday--Christmas Day--was still cool--56° in AM, but no wind and very little rain. Friday was gray but warmer and Saturday was like early April--showers and sunshine and a warmer breeze. This AM there is bright sunshine, birds singing, and a very little breeze.



From Tsi-fang

From Tsi - Tam

On Wednesday we lighted a fire in the fireplace and it was most welcome and we kept it up until yesterday when it was no longer needed. I've worn woolen clothes all week--my tweed suit and sweater mostly, with the brown dress Alice made for me a year ago to alternate.

The washwoman put the clothes to soak Sunday nite and had to wash on Monday but the clothes hung on the veranda most of the week before they were dry. She finished ironing late last nite. We had to invent jobs to keep her busy during the first of the week! Our servants certainly have a soft snap but we can't do without them.

On Christmas eve the Christian Chinese gave a feast to the Christians foreign and Chinese and to the workmen on the compound whether Christian or not. It was a good feast and Ah Siú--our woman--told Miss Moninger afterwards that Mâu Ku-niâng was more skillful with the chopsticks whan Mrs. French! I can get enough to eat but I'm slow at it.

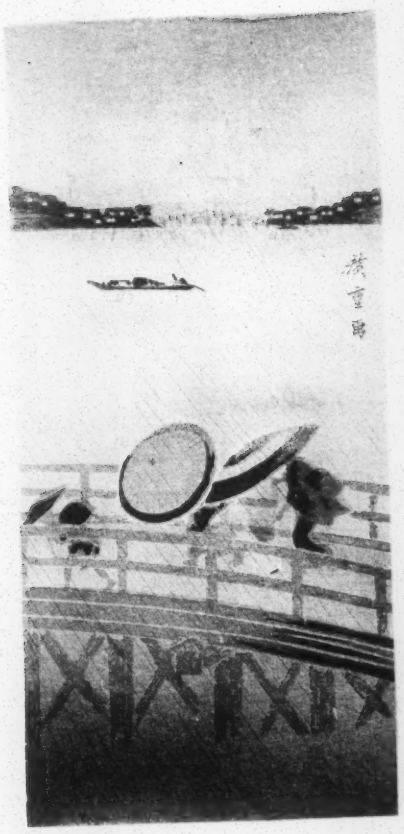
Later, that same evening we went to the Thomas house to decorate the Christmas tree. There are evergreens here but so few and prized so highly that it is hard to get them for Christmas trees. Instead a native tree is used--the hài--hô (hì-hô) tree--which has large, glossy, dark green leaves. It makes quite a graceful tree and trims very well. Mrs. Thomas had a good many ornaments and considerable tinsel, etc. so the tree looked very nice.

Early next AM--about 6:00--we went down to the Thomas house and found all the kids up--even the baby was sitting in his buggy in a little pink knit suit, wide awake and watching. Mr. Thomas lighted the candles on the tree and Mr. French put a pillow under his coat and a wisp of cotton on his chin and distributed gifts. Jean had been very ill with fever the day before so she lay on the couch and her gifts nearly snowed her under. Being an only girl she was wonderfully well remembered. So were the rest of us. I received far more than I deserved. Miss Moninger gave me a piece of tapestry--I had wanted one for our dining-room; the Frenches gave me a set of seals--one with my Chinese name and the other with an 'M' on it; the Thomas family gave me a set of six cocanut finger bowls--made of the shells, carved and polished and with my name '毛' in gold on each one; Miss Chapin gave me a xxxxx Manila luncheon set; Miss taylor gave me a Miau head cloth (such as the Miau women wear on their heads)--about xx a foot square and worked with the most elaborate embroidery; and I told you about the embroidered and hemstitched bedspread from Dr. Lee, I believe. Don't you think I was most generously remembered? I sent only a few cards and made very few gifts--a blotter for Miss M., a box of candy and a wastebasket (which I knew he wanted) to the Thomases, and two pair of chopsticks to the French's!

The enclosed cards are typical of the sort exchanged out here. The one from the Campbells was a very popular kind--received three of that kind. The red ones are especially good--red being a favorite color with the Chinese. Mrs. Melrose, Sr's card looks as if it had come from Japan. The Pattons of Shanghai

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS AND BEST WISHES FOR THE NEW YEAR

恭賀新禧



Oh ye Christmas, Christmas, Christmas
And we wish you Christmas Joy,
And Heavenly Peace that came to earth
When came the Bethlehem Boy.

From

Mr & Mrs Wilbur M. Campbell

Pavilion,—Chinese Temple
Kiungchow, Hainan, China.

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS AND BEST
WISHES FOR THE NEW YEAR

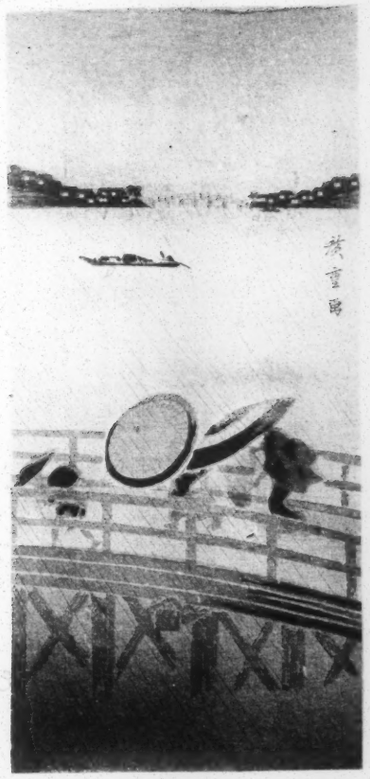
恭
賀
新
禧

Dr. Mazze

From Grace Lee.

毛澤東

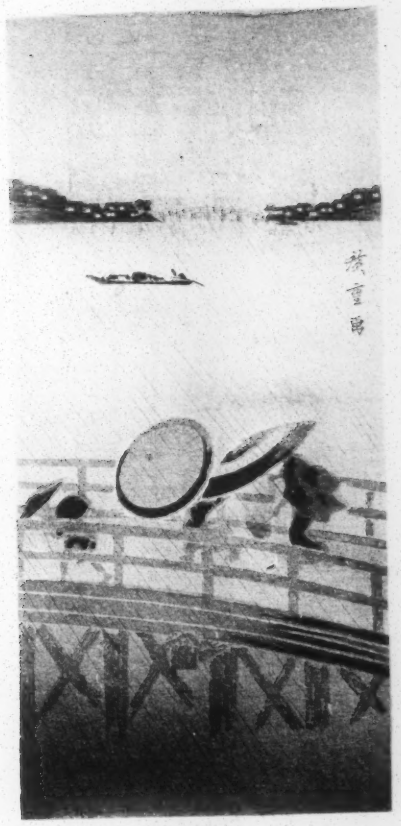
李求精



CHRISTMAS GREETINGS AND BEST WISHES FOR THE NEW YEAR

恭賀新禧

恭賀新禧



are China Council members and I met them in September. The card signed The Melroses is from Mr and Mrs. P. C. Melrose at Nodoa and is very typical of the card which will be fitting for both foreigners and Chinese. The card from Dr. Lee is a similar type but even more Chinese than foreign. The other two cards are from Tsok zih and Tsi-fang and are cards which can be purchased in the market and the desired greeting put on. Tho't you might be interested in them as they are mostly different from any cards at home. The check from the Associated Mission Treasurers is a clever thing, isn't it? The red characters on it mean 'Presbyterian'.

Don't feel badly that you sent me nothing--any of you-- I know your wishes and appreciate them. Exchange is about 3.90 now--nearly $4 for every dollar gold! But to send money to you would be a different song! nearly $20 local for $5.00 gold!

On Christmas Day, about 10:00 AM a Christmas service was held in the chapel and it was a very fine service. Afterwards tea was served--and, to finish up in proper Chinese fashion a deafening clatter and bang of firecrackers.

Have had a'cold' most all week and it is winding up now with a beautiful coldsore! Of course, it is a thing of beauty to say nothing of the comfort of it.

Received the pictures on Friday--a big American mail came then--a letter from Ruth (forwarded by Alice), one from Alice and from Dad and from A. C. The pictures are all good-- the group especially so. Many thanks, A. C.--and the log-rolling views are fine. You had a better day than the year before, I believe.

Sorry, Dad, you aren't feeling ten parts well. Hope the new glasses do the work for you. And don't attempt too much, please.

The dinner bell rings--must go and do my duty to roast chicken! Love to all of you--

Yours---

Esther Morse

P.S: Our latest evening entertainment is anagrams. Ever play them? They're great brain teasers. Think you'd all enjoy them.

* * * * * *

Kachek, Hainan
January 4, 1931

Dear Folks:

I believe I started my last letter with the sentence I could well use now, 'This has been a hectic week.' On Christmas day I received a cablegram from Dr. Bell in Canton stating that I was to have two guests leaving Hongkong on the 26th. That meant they'd be in Hoihow on the 27th and we could expect them here the 28th. Mr. Thomas and family wanted to go out to Hoihow anyway so they went out to greet them and bring them back. On Sunday in came Mr. Thomas--and three guests instead of two!--

and driving Dr. Bercovitz' car. It seems that Dr. Miriam Bell whom I knew in Philadelphia, and a friend of hers in Canton, Miss Clara Tingley, had prevailed on Katherine Jacobson, my cabin-mate on the Pres. Jackson, to come, too. They had met Dr. Bercovitz in Hongkong (he is on his vacation there) and he had told them to use his car. Katherine drives a car so they were all set. Then we had dinners and teas and excursions of all sorts for several days and a big New Year's dinner here at our house, for which Miss Skinner and a guest of hers, Miss Patterson, had come down from Hoihow--so we had thirteen guests for New Years dinner, counting all the people at the station,too! On Friday they had to start back in order to get a steamer for Canton. I was awfully glad to see them--Dr. Bell and I had several good talks on medical things and Katherine is interesting and peppy as always. Miss Tingley has been on the Field about a year and is quite interesting but rather different than anyone else I've known. So you can see it has been a full week.

In addition the principal of the boys school is very ill--has been ill since about Dec. 22. Dr. Bell and I were both asked to see him on Dec. 30 and treated him thereafter. I can't for the life of me see how he has lived thus far--unless prayer has done it--he is desperately ill still and I've practically no hope--except in prayer. However, if he lives thro' tonite, tomorrow Mr. French and Miss Moninger are going out to Hoihow for more medicine--perhaps he will pull thro'. He is needed badly and I hope he will live--I can't think of another thing to do. His trouble all started with an abscessed tooth--am afraid it's a blood stream infection now--like mama's.

We had an American mail yesterday and I had a letter of Christmas greetings from the Oil City church with the word that they are sending me a portable typewriter for a Christmas gift! Isn't that very lovely of them? True--I had half-way hinted at my need of a typewriter, and they seem to take hints beautifully!! I'll have to be more moderate in my next hint, eh what?!

Miss Moninger received several books for Christmas and in the interval since our guests departed I have read one of them--"Cimmarron" by Edna Ferber. The others are 'The Little French Girl' by Anne Douglass Sedgwick, 'The Kramer Girls' by Ruth Suchow and 'The waters under the Earth' by Martha Ostenso. Think I'll tackle the last named one next.

The moonlight has been wonderfully gorgeous the past few nights. Last nite there were rows of fluffy clouds back of the moon. The clouds looked like cream that has just 'broken' in churning--rows and rows of them. It's surely pretty.

Oh, would you be interested in our menu for the New Years dinner? Fruit cocktail, soup, fish and potato chips, roast duck with raisin and nut dressing and gravy, rice, creamed asparagus and green beans,hot rolls, mango chutney and pickled peaches, cocanut heart salad, date pudding with hard sauce, coffee, nuts and candy. Cocanut heart salad is quite a delicacy here--and well may be, for a cocanut tree nust be killed whenever we have it. It is the tender, white center of the growing top of the tree

where the leaves emerge. It is crisp, quite starchy and has a flavor all its own--I can't describe it--a very faint, delicate taste. We seldom, if ever have it, unless there are guests, then we go find a tree we think can be sacrificed. I've tasted it three times since I've been in Hainan.

Must say Adios and good night--

Yours ever 'n' always
Esther Morse.

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Kachek, Hainan.
January 8, 1931

Dear Folks:

I haven't answered all your letters that came in the last American mail and we're looking for another in a day or so, so I'd better get busy. The typewriter hasn't arrived and I'd better not count on it for sometime yet, I imagine!

Sorry Sally is such a disappointment--her many failures make you wonder about her past, nicht wahr? Ruth always insisted that Peggy was the better of the two and it seems she was clairvoyant--or whatever--but then you said the same thing, I believe--and that about makes a quorum, eh what?

Again, many thanks, and many more, for the pictures. The group at Starbuck is very, very good. I have had it on my desk until today when it was put in the album. I showed it to my teacher and he was much interested, tho' he made few comments. I guess he thinks Americans are odd folks. But, not so very! Thank heavens, he has a sense of humor! One day I asked him how to say 'old maid' in Hainanese, and he wanted to know what it meant so I told him it was a woman of uncertain age who always wore black stockings and carried white handkerchiefs and had long hair and positive ideas. But he said I didn't classify! Every now and again he says 'lau ku-niang'(old maid.) about something just for fun. Well, the other day he asked why I hadn't cut my hair (as I said before, the term 'personal teacher' is an ambiguous term) and I said 'Lau Kuniang'. He laughed but refused that either as a reason or an excuse so I gave the following reasons in this order: 1. My parents had not wanted me to cut my hair 2. Short hair was too expensive 3. It wouldn't be becoming because my hair is so straight 4. I am too fat to have short hair. To the first he said, 'What! you, over 21 and obey your parents! I know American customs! Ha!ha!' But I finally made him believe that that first reason had some weight with me. At last he said, "the first is the only real reason, the second--maybe,--but the rest aren't real reasons at all. But the first is good." I think it really did have weight, too, in his opinion of me. Then--I learned, he does not approve of short hair--he is one of the older Chinese and adheres to old ways quite firmly. Who would imagine length of hair could make a difference in attitude out here?

Am wondering if the electric lights--and accessories--materialized or if you got the gasoline lamp. Will be much interested to know. Hope you can have electricity tho' if it won't be too expensive.

The French's have a gasoline lamp and it does give a nice light. Our cook was over there and saw it one night. When he came back he said to Miss Moninger "Why don't you get a good light like they have?" That has almost become a stock phrase here now.

Took some pictures of the mountains on the skyline some Sundays ago and when the prints came back they were so bright that the mountains failed to show. I'm so far from a photo company that I haven't bothered to ask to have them printed darker but am sending the negatives to you so you can see the skyline in the film--and if you wish, have a print made--the foreground is grazing land with clumps of wild pineapple and bamboo, ferns and pampas grass scattered here and there with occasional palms and other trees. The mountains aren't as pretty from these angles taken as from other places near here but that was a relatively clear day. So many of the days there is a haze over the mountains and I don't know how to combat that.

The principal of the school, whom I mentioned in my letter to Dad, as very ill--died early yesterday--3:30 AM and was buried at 4:30 PM. I'm just sick about it but there wasn't much more if anything at all, that could be done. The funeral was a Christian one with quite a few of the Chinese customs attached. The service was in the church. The school boys had made banners extoling Mr. Lim's virtues and abilities. These were ranged both inside and outside the church during the service and were carried at the head of the procession to the grave. The church people followed the school boys, then, the hospital group, then the coffin and finally the family. The Chinese love firecrackers and there were many of them, popping all along the funeral procession. The mourners wore white clothes with sackcloth on the head and feet. As soon as the body is in the grave these garments are taken off and the sleeveband of black is worn thereafter. The poor wife was on the verge of collapse--she had watched him and nursed him for nearly two weeks with only short snatches of sleep.

I was interested in the other details and perhaps you would be too. The grave is not made very deep--three feet maybe and just large enough to receive the coffin which is of plain boards, undecorated in any way. Before the coffin is lowered into the grave several shovelfuls of lime are mixed with loose dirt at the bottom of the hole. Then the coffin is put in and a bamboo matting fitted over it. A mixture of dirt and lime is put over it all and water put on. This makes a sort of seal over the coffin and I'm told that oftentimes when old graves are opened the coffins will be in a good state even after many years. It was an interesting process to me. This was my first view of a Chinese funeral.

I could talk on and on--the hour is late--so Adios. My love to all of you. Yours--

Esther Morse

Kachek, Hainan
January 9, 1931

Dear Ruth:

I've two letters of yours before me--I enjoyed your description of your trip east--tho' I can well imagine how tiring it was. The layout of your room and the grounds looks as if you were in nicer surroundings than at Pierre.

You regretted not being able to send me anything at Christmas--don't worry about that for now I will ask you to get some things for me. There are certain 'notions' one could use if they were procurable but we can't get them here, so if you'll get them for me and in sending them mark on the box, or the customs slip at the P.O., the total value of them, for duty will be charged on that basis. Things we need and can't get here are (1) Dress shields--2 or 3 pair--not expensive--10¢ store kind (2) Rubber elastic--3/4 in wide-- 5 yds (3) Hairnets--medium brown, double, capshaped, dozen or so-- (4) Hooks and eyes on tape--1 yd. (5) Lingerie clasps--2 pr. (6)Shoe trees-- 2-pr. (7)Small blotters-- 3 x 6 or 4 x 8 inch size (8)Rubber erasers to fit over tips of pencils, so-- ☞ --one or two. The whole list shouldn't cost much more than a couple or three dollars in a 10 cent store. Then if you could get a Gossard front lace corset, size 29, and don't pay more than $5.00 for it--I think you would be making me a very fine present. /And many thanks.

There is another thing I'd like--the recipe for Lowell pudding! I think you have the old cookbook, don't you? And is there a cake recipe in it for a chocolate nut cake called Mrs. Baier's Chocolate cake. I'd like that too. Miss M. directs most of the cooking but I'd like a Lowell pudding sometime, I think and she says she's never made a steamed pudding.

The French's will be at our house for Sunday dinner and we will have creamed chicken and biscuits. Our living expenses this last month, food, fuel, servants, extras for our guests and everything cost each of us $21.00 gold, or American money. I've tried to budget my $75.00 per month salary and this is the way it looks now--I may have to adjust it considerably later:

Living	--$21.00	Books	--$6.50
Savings	-- 15.00	Vacation	-- 5.00
Tithe	-- 8.00	Postage	-- 5.00
Insurance	-- 7.50	Clothes	-- 2.00
		Checking Ac'ct	-- 5.00

The first four items are non-transferable as is also the vacation fund, but the other accounts may be drawn on to supply a deficit in any other. For instance, I'll never use $6.50 gold per month for books for a year or so, at least--if I need that for clothes--or whatever--it may be used. Or if we spend more than $21.00 gold apiece on our current living expenses it may be made up from another account. We are trying to get our living expenses below that rate--trying to teach our cook more economy etc. At the present rate of exchange $21,00 gold = $70.56 local currency. Expenses were $70.77 this month --or

about 6 cents more than $21.00! I'm just as tight as ever about spending monty--even if it does sound 3 x larger than it used to!

You recall seeing Socony oil advertised all across the country, nicht wahr? Had it occurred to you what it meant--Standard Oil Company Of New York? I'd never tho't of it until I reached here. The oil used here is either from the Standard Oil Co. of N♂ Y. or else Asiatic Petroleum, Limited--an English concern. Last week Mr. Hō, the Chinese representative of the Standard Oil Co sent Mr. Thomas, Mr. Tappan, Dr. Lee and myself each a big memorandum pad with the company's advertisements on it--very nice pads. Now Miss M. and the French's are wondering why they didn't rate pads too!

It has been raining the last two days and is very dark just now, tho' only 2:00 PM. Expect it will begin to pour again soon. Is getting colder, too. Must say Adios for the time being. Write when you can. Am glad to hear any little thing. My love to you. Yours---

Esther Morse

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Kachek, Hainan
January 11, 1931

Dear Alice

Your letter and Christmas card arrived in good season and were both much appreciated--Ruth's letter that you forwarded came in the same mail so I heard from all my family in that mail, a letter from Dad and one from A. C. arriving then, also. The picture of the group at Starbuck is very good and I've looked at it many times. My teacher's comments about Clayton were--'Ah, he is very strong.' About Jess, he said 'A big man, a very big man.' About you, he said "Care for her children had made her thin." He seemed to enjoy the pictures as I showed them to him. I judge my teacher is about your age and he has a married son, a girl of 13 and a small boy--and has lost two sons. His married son doesn't amount to much, I guess, and is quite a grief to him. His comments on home life, raising of children and so on are the universal comments of parenthood, I judge--I've heard 'em before!

The French's teacher is a young man of 21 who is quite modern in his ideas. He is married--apparently an affair arranged by his parents--and we have wondered how successful a marriage it is, because the other day he gave us quite a dissertation on the old marriage customs--how they ruin the lives of many young people, and he spoke with considerable warmth. It is very interesting to have these two teachers--of course, the older man is my teacher and gives most of his time to me, but he has certain hours with the Frenches and their teacher comes over to teach me. It is good for all of us to get new ideas and methods in this way. I'm very happy to get the two points of view.

Your question about the weather getting colder as the season goes on can be answered yes and no. If the weather is rainy it is always cold. If it is clear and sunny the weather is quite warm and comfortable--a tang to the air, like October weather--or else like early May weather at home. The days are getting longer again and when it is pleasant its really very nice outside. They all seem to expect the coldest weather in February. But last Monday I was wearing a white dress and a sun-helmet. By Thursday I had on a wool scarf over my cotton dress. By Saturday I was wearing a wool dress and my heaviest coat with the fur collar. Today I still wear the wool dress but won't wear the coat with the fur collar to church--will wear the old blue tweed instead. The Chinese have so little I don't want them to feel I'm exhibiting possessions. They are all barefoot--most of them--this weather and many have only cotton clothes. Those who can afford it wear sweaters under their coats. But the little kids wear 'splits'--if any pants at all--and they look cold whether they are or not. I expect they think us extravagant for having a fire in the grate.

Later--Am now back from church. Mr. Thomas preached--the first time I had heard any of the missionaries preach in Chinese. Of course I didn't understand enough to get a lot of the sermon but I was able to recognize phrases--which is more than I've done before. Perhaps one reason was that Mr. Thomas has a very deliberate way of speaking and I could get the phrases isolated enough to understand. I was thinking about the word 'understand'--here. The character is 明白. It is made up of 3 words: 日 meaning day or sun, 月 meaning moon and 白 meaning white. The first two characters together make a separate word, meaning bright, or light, or clear. That combined with white means 'bright white', or 'clear white', or 'understand'. Isn't that interesting?

One thing I tho't you'd be interested in is the way people respond to question. At home if one asked a person a question and he just grunted it would be impolite, to say the least, but its quite the kheh here. One may call the servant--he answers with 'Ae' (Eh)--and when he is told to do something he signifies his understanding by 'Unh'--(that's as near as I can spell it!) If a servant fails to grunt in response to a question or a command he is due for a bawling out! It is an infectious habit. Miss M. answers--especially affirmative answers by saying 'Haeh' (heh). My teacher assents to things by saying 'Ae'. It was horribly disconcerting at first but now I am grunting replies along with the rest! It's no different than our 'Uh-huh' or 'Yeah' I guess--but interesting!

Guess Edna and I can hold sympathetic hands across the sea! I'm fatter 'n' ever! Hope if she finds the quick and easy method to a svelte figure she passes the information on to me. I've been doing exercises but it has only given me more of an appetite!

Hope everyone is getting on famously in school and there is peace and harmony in all departments. How was basketball this year? I scarcely realize there are such things anymore! The boys in the school play volleyball some, but there is no

competitive spirit--or but little. I have wanted to learn to play tennis but so far we've not been able to. I think I've had a racquet in my hands once.

Had I written that the Oil City Church was sending me a portable typewriter? It isn't here yet but I'm hoping it will arrive soon. I am way behind with my correspondence--as usual. I'm very pleased that they tho't to do so nice a thing for me.

Next Sunday will be my turn to hold Sunday services again--will have to get busy and find a sermon. I'm not good at making up one--Miss M. always outlines her talks and gives them without reading them--she says it keeps her in better shape to give talks when she is home on furlough. Of course, thats good to look forward too, but I'm absorbing too much new material myself to think of putting out anything--I don't know enough. So I'll find and read a sermon.

I'll be glad to do all I can--in any way I can--to help in the missionary interest in your church. If there's anything you'd especially like to know, please let me know--and I'll try to get the imformation for you.

My best greetings to all of you--and my love.

Yours ever--
Esther Morse.

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Kachek, Hainan
January 11, 1931

Dear Dad:

I'm up early this AM--for a change and will start my letter writing right away--for I've still plenty to do of it--and we're still looking for that American mail! A Seattle steamer was due in Hongkong Jan. 5 and a steamer from Hongkong is in Hoihow harbor but the sea is too rough to get the mail off. So--each day, as the hour approaches 2:30 or 3:00 PM we hope--then when the mail man comes he has only local mail, so we know the mail hasn't gotten off the steamer yet.

The winter numbers of the news letter came a day or so ago and I will be sending them to you by this same mail, if I can. You won't need to send them on for I ordered plenty of copies of them. I hope you find them of interest.

Am glad you have some new glasses. They should help your head, surely--but if not, do not hesitate to take further measures for your health. If the glasses do not help your head--tho' I expect they will--had you tried lying down for a time in the PM as a means of relieving your headaches. That might be a benefit. So let me know how the glasses fit.

Well--have had time out for waffles and syrup, and have poked up the fire in the fireplace so its blazing merrily--now

to write some more. I can appreciate now the statement regarding fireplaces--that one scorches on one side and freezes on the other! It isn't that cold here, quite--but was down to 54° yesterday AM. The houses have no heat except from the open fireplaces so it takes quite a bit of fuel. It rained some last nite so this AM it is a trifle warmer. Last year they had six weeks steady of this kind of weather.

The French's will have dinner with us today. We plan to have creamed chicken and biscuits, candied sweet potatoes, eggplant, lettuce and egg salad, canned fruit and cake. I'm quite fond of eggplant now and they serve it in several ways--it is most often fried but I like it very much boiled and then a hot spicy vinegar preparation put on it. Our boy tried cinnamon rolls yesterday for the first time. They weren't huge successes but not bad for a new hand! He was a bit too careful with the sugar and cinnamon! I guess he took Miss M's scolding about his extravagance to heart!

The Universal Week of Prayer was observed here this last week with prayer services every nite. I went to three of the meetings--I can understand so little that it seemed hard to go every nite, tho' perhaps I should have done so. The attendance has been only fair--as is customary everywhere, I guess.

In her room where she greets the Chinese Miss M. has several pictures and rolls with illustrative texts. The postman asked for one one day. The one he wanted was a pictorial illustration of the broad way to destruction and of the narrow way to life. So at Christmas time Miss M. wrapped up one of those rolls for him and a Scripture text Calendar for each of the two men in the Post Office. When we went to the P.O. next we saw all three of these up on the walls--a witness to all who enter. Scripture calendars were given to practically everyone on the compound and to others roundabout. Miss M. and Mr. Tappan made these their Christmas gifts to the Chinese.

Since the death of Mr. Lim, the principal of the boys school, his work had to be taken over by others. Miss M. has his mathematics and science classes, at least until the end of the semester. Some other arrangement may be made later on. Mr. Thomas has all he can do so he couldn't take any of the work, but there is a Chinese evangelist here who can't live in his own village because of disturbed conditions there, and he is taking the rest of Mr. Lim's classes. The pastor here, then, fills the evangelist's charge whenever possible--as is usually possible, because there is often some evangelist here when the Pastor is away. This is a center for evangelists to be sent out--and the various ones come in here every few weeks for more supplies--tracts, Bibles, etc. and for advice and fellowship, too--so there are usually one or more additional evangelists around each Sunday. The Pastor often has one of them preach in his stead, even when he is here--it is good for them to have the advantage of preaching to larger congregations and it gives the listeners opportunity to hear other preachers. The foreigners are able to judge the progress made by these evangelists in this way and to know when they may be candidates for ordination. Some never do reach

the state where ordination is advisable, tho' making excellent evangelistic workers. There is one man who is a preacher of unusual promise but who has been tried out in various places as a pastor and he just doesn't measure up in doing pastoral work. So he will probably continue as an evangelistic worker. This business of training up workers is most interesting--I'm only just learning a little about it.

My language teacher has been ill with asthma the past three days. He is rather frail anyway. I haven't seen him since he has been sick--since I'm a woman, even tho' a doctor, it isn't proper for me to go to his room, unless I'm called. Mr. French has seen him and I've had reports as to his progress nearly every day tho'. The hospital staff are used to treating him, so they are looking after him adequately, I'm sure.

The church bell has rung for S. S.--guess I'd better find a period. It is raining some so the 'baby organ' is to go to the church today instead of the big one.

Goodbye, dear folks,--my love to all of you.

Yours

Esther Morse

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Kachek, Hainan
January 24, 1931

Dear Alice Jessie:

How will it be if I write to you this week? I expect you're very busy at school--and outside of school, too--and are glad when Saturday comes. So am I. Am so glad I won't have to study today unless I wish--tho' I'll probably spend some time at it later on.

We are all invited to the wedding of the nephew of my teacher. My teacher is just about the only person in his village who is Christian (and some are unkind enough to say that he doesn't work very hard at it.) His nephew and mother are very adverse to the Gospel so the marriage ceremony and customs will all be the old heathen forms. However, we are asked to attend the feast primarily and not the ceremony. It is in a village about three miles away and one must go on foot because part of the way is thro' rice fields--just narrow paths with room for only one person to walk. These paths are on the divisions between the fields and up about 12 to 18 inches from the mud and water in which the rice is growing. A misstep means disaster! and I've no wish to ever fall into a paddy-field(as these muddy fields are called.)

The customs regarding the engagement of children still holds here, tho' the Christian families are less likely to indulge in the custom. The parents arrange an engagement for their son with the daughter of some family in another village. The engagement may be arranged as soon as the child is a few years old but is surely arrnaged before he finishes school. A boy is

said to have reached man's estate at the age of 15, but is usually not married until he is 18 or 20.

The girl may be any age when the marriage is consummated but mostly she must be past 15 or 16 before the ceremony takes place. Should the boy's family be Christian and wish him to have an educated wife they request the family of the girl to send her to school, paying her expenses if need be. If the girl's family refuses to send her to school the boy's family send her, but take her into their home for vacations--in other words, they bring her up as a child of their own, inasmuch as she will ultimately be a daughter-in-law anyway. On the other hand, should the girl's family be Christian and wish to send her to school, they must first secure the consent of the family into which she is engaged. In general, as soon as a daughter is engaged--at whatever age--the parent's rather feel their responsibility toward her has ceased. She is now a part of the family into which she will marry, tho' she will stay at home until the wedding occurs.

The mission rather frowns on child engagements in Christian families tho' they still occur at times. The customs of generations cannot be changed over-night, or even in thirty years. Occasionally even the mission grants the advisability of such an engagement. For example, a man and his wife and children are the only Christians in a large family. As his son grows up the man's father and other relatives wish the son to be engaged, so rather than have them arrange a heathen marriage--as they would surely do if he took no steps toward arranging an engagement--the father goes to a Christian family and arranges an engagement between his son and a daughter of that family. Thus, his relatives are satisfied, because the boy is engaged and the father has done his best to insure a Christian wife and Christian environment for his son.

Much later: We've been to the wedding feast and it was very good--I think the best feast I've attended since I've been here tho' not the largest. Just after the feast the bride came--their heathen ceremony will be this evening--and there will be revelry tonite and tomorrow. The bride is carried from her home to the groom's in a red marriage chair. She is preceded by red lanterns and bands of musicians(if we can dignify them by that name--boys who beat on metal plates and a man who plays a fife.) Her furniture precedes her--her dowry. Today there were six or seven loads of furniture--carried by one man or two depending on the size and weight of the articles. As she approaches the music gets louder and louder, the groom goes to meet her and leads her into the house. This little bride looked very young, but so did the groom. She is slender and rather pretty and had on an embroidered white satin dress. She will sit in the house until the rest of the ceremony is completed (I don't know what that will be--we had to leave because it was getting late--tho' they asked us to stay, but foreigners are not really safe on the roads after dark, so we came on--Perhaps some other time I'll get to witness the whole ceremony and can tell you then.)

We met my teacher's family--his mother, wife, son and daughter-in-law, daughter and little boy. His children are all nice-looking tho' quite evidently and typically Chinese!

Take care of your self and study hard. Greetings to all your folks and my love to all of you.

Yours,
Esther Morse.

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Kachek, Hainan
January 24, 1931

Dear Ruth:

I've had an envelope addressed to you for almost a week, but each day have tho't perhaps there'd be an American mail and I could hear from you before I wrote. The last mail for this week is in and I had only a card and a package from America--the card from Mrs. McCoid whom I had not heard from for about a year, and the package a book,'The Story of Philosophy' by Will Durant, from Dr. Lins. It is strange but the books I've had come thro' without duty but I had a small fruitcake and some nuts from some of the girls at Flint. They had valued it a little high even for U.S. money, I think and, that value when transferred into Mex. made a duty of over $7.00 local currency! A rather high priced gift--eh, what? However, I never mentioned it in my note of thanks to them--it won't happen often and I can afford it occasionally, I guess!

The card from Carrie had a cute verse on it--as follows:

Just "Merry Christmas"
The little wish that's on this card
Isn't new or clever,
But nobody ever meant it more,
Nobody, Notime, Nohow, Never!

Mr. and Mrs. S. H. McCoid
Shirley Jean. . . Phyllis

I tho't it very nice and I have a sneaking suspicion Carrie originated it--tho' maybe not--but it rather sounds like her.

A while ago some friend of Miss M's sent her 'The Art of Thinking' by Dimnet. Last nite when I opened "The Story of Philosophy" she said--"Now you can't make fun of my "Art of Thinking" any more--you've got a deeper book than that now!" Think I'll enjoy it if I get to read it--tho' I guess I can find time if I take it.

Dr. Bercovitz and Mr. Campbell were on the compound for a day and a half this past week. It's always nice to have visitors but I am always so tired afterwards that I'm not convinced I enjoy their presence very thoroly. Dr. B .is such an intense, energetic person, too--and then the rest of the females on the compound must needs bother with teas and dinners et ceters et al

ad infinitum. So far I've held my tongue but I'm afraid I'll spit out some day what I think of all this fiddle-faddle and sham and show. Then, on top of that Dr B. urged me to 'cultivate' the Thomas' and Frenches more--drop in and talk a few minutes every day. I don't know whom he thinks will benefit by such doings. That's done all the time in some stations and it seems to me tongues wag more elsewhere than here--probably not tho' if I don't drop around to hear them wag! So there--you know what temper I'm in! The weather's nice now, but I think it will rain! Really!

The enclosed clippings are some Laura Overton sent me--mostly from the Hastings Tribune. Thinking you probably did not have access to any of these news items and that some at least will be of interest, I'm sending them back across the Pacific.

Yesterday was interesting--tho' exhausting. We went to my teacher's home to the wedding feast of this nephew's. I had heard so much of his family I was eager to see them. He is a very good looking Chinese himself--judged by Western ideas of beauty--his wife is nice-looking, tho' obviously not as well educated as he is--his oldest son is very thin and frail-looking but quite attractive in facial expression. The son's wife is a pleasant, fat girl. The 13 year old girl is very cute but quite typically Chinese and his 8 year old boy is a mighty nice child--has the best shaped head I've seen in all China. The nephew is slender boy--not more than 18 I'm sure and a nice looking boy tho' not as handsome as Lâe Tintae's own son. My teacher certainly had a big responsibility on his hands in his family. His oldest brother died some years ago. That makes him the oldest in the family and responsible for all the others--which includes now his mother, who is 86 and very, very frail, his wife, son, son's wife, daughter, little boy, his brother's wife, his nephew and the nephew's wife, and counting himself--ten in all. His wife and daughter-in-law and daughter have some rice fields to tend--the son and nephew have been in school but I don't know what they do now--and Lâe Tintae teachēs us foreigners to make money to keep things going. We pay him what any teacher would get here--really quite a liberal salary--but I don't see how they live on it! And his home is one of the better middle class homes. What must the others do--and how can they live at all? - - - - -

Well, I've just come from a breakfast of waffles and syrup --oh, yes--it's January 25 now--and still sunny but there's a fairly high wind and the wind has an edge to it--so it may "iák-kôa" (yŭk-kwá) (cold rain) before long.

Sometime whenever you think of it and happen to be near a ' 5 and 10' will you get one or two strings of 'pearl' beads--pretty good looking and quite nice--rather small size rather than large ones--please. The silversmiths make very pretty chains of enamel and silver and when combined with pearls they are very, very lovely. Of course, real pearls are lovely but '5 and 10' will work quite well!!

Mr. Thomas and Pastor Ngou have gone to Doa Lou (Dwá Lau) to have services today. This is market day there and they will be able to have a larger crowd than on off-market day. The assistant principal of the boy's school will f ill the pulpit here. I've never heard him preach before. Since I've been here-- 4 months--I've heard five different pastors speak from this pulpit--and Mr. Bang will make the 6th. It's interesting to hear different ones tho' they're not all as easy to understand as Pastor Ngou (Ngaun) (say the 'aun' all as one and precede it by the 'ng' as if you had left the 'i' off of 'ing')?

Must say Adios now and write to A. C. He sent me a sprig of pussy willow last letter that was so pretty--and so welcome It was quite a curiosity to folks here--tho' up north in China there are willows.

My love to you. Write when you can.

Yours,

Esther Morse.

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Kachek, Hainan
January 25, 1931

Dear Clayton:

American mail is always welcome and your two latest contributions are before me as I write--I think I haven't laughed as hard in a long, long time as I did over your comments on the Notre Dame-Southern California game and Polly's reaction to Paul Bunyan! I'm still laughing in fact! And thanks'heaps much'for the pussy willow. It looked-and smelled-so good. I showed it to my teacher and he didn't know what it was--so I found the word 'willow' for him in the dictionary and he said he had seen them when he was north at Hankow and Shanghai but there weren't any here in Hainan, so far as he knew. The season must be early for the 'pussies' to be out in December.

The snaps inclosed this time are of our servants. Our woman wears a rather sorrowful face now tho', for--perhaps I told the story last week?--her husband, a ne'er-do-well, came and took their little girl, eight years old, and sold her. For a long time we didn't know whether she was sold to be a daughter-in-law, or a slave. Recently it was learned she had been sold into a home to be raised as a daughter-in-law for a son in the home. That is a better fate than to be a slave, but makes it rather out of the question for the mother to get herback again. Before we knew where the child was A-siusaid to Miss M. that she'd work for us forever if we'd only get the child back to her. Now that she knows where she is she still grieves but says all that can be done is to ask God to care for her. The fact that so large a price was paid for the child--$100.00-leads folks to think she probably was bought into a good family and will be well raised. A slave would scarcely bring that much money, either.

The coolie--Tin Hoa--is one of the nicest Chinese servants I've ever seen. I think we are fortunate to have him. The cook is interesting but I think his mental processes are of a much lower order than Tin Hoa's. However he's a good cook.

Yesterday I saw a banana blossom for the first time. It was about the size of a quart measure--perhaps a trifle larger. Each petal was 4 or 5 inches broad, at the base and tapered to a point with a total length of 8 or 9 inches. The color was red--a dull red with tones of yellow and green in it. As each leaf curled back with the opening of the flower five or six greenish stamens with a little star-like flower cup at the end of each, was revealed--ranged in an even row. These become the bananas in time. It takes about three or four months for them to mature. The little sketches I've drawn aren't very accurate but give perhaps a wee bit of an idea of the flower and the way it opens making a whole bunch of bananas.

The blossom

The stamens within one petal

The film I'm enclosing to ask you if you could get some prints of it. The place in Hongkong which does my work made no print at all. We're anxious for one if it can be done. This is a coffin, and the way it is carried. The mother of this lad did not even know he was ill and it was impossible and impracticable to have her come to the funeral. They asked me to get a picture of the coffin to send to her--it would give her that morsel of comfort to see his coffin, even tho' she couldn't see his face again. The funeral was held on a very dark day--I opened the Kodak as wide as I could but had no tripod and had to make it a snapshot. I doubt if anything can be made of it but if it can be done I tho't perhaps the studio in Tacoma could do it. Will you please have them try?--and if anything can come out of it I think three or four prints would be appreciated here. Thanks a lot.

You asked if I did any doctoring--practically none. The Language Committee is very strict in this regard. So many doctors come out and have to go to work before they know the language and are handicapped afterwards in that they never do get the language well--that the China Council is 'coming down' harder on the doctors than anyone else--and anything I do by way of medecine is more or less surreptitious. I go to the hospital occasionally and look at cases and I'm checking up on the lab. work and histories and physicals done by the others, and I look after--to some extent--the foreigners on the compound but that's all I do by way of medecine. Sometimes I get very impatient to be doing more--but I haven't ' words', so what can I do?

Have been studying for an exam which comes next week. We will be expected to know the Lord's Prayer and to know how to use the dictionary--among other things. I can repeat the Prayer if I can say it slowly but in church the folks rattle it off so

fast that my tongue, unaccustomed to the words, gets twisted up and I'm usually compelled to stop about half-way thro'. Using a Chinese dictionary is quite an art. Each character has a radical, or common form and one must first find that, and then look among the characters formed from that radical until one is found with the same number of strokes similarly arranged as the character one is searching for. Opposite that is the number of the page where the meanings will be found. For instance, 言五, 言青, 言射--all have the same radical 言 which means 'to speak'. But 言每 'word' has seven strokes besides those in the radical, 言青 --'please' has eight strokes. And so on. It's quite fascinating but rather wearing and tedious sometimes.

and 言射 'thanks' has ten additional strokes.

The church bell has rung. Adios--my love to you. May all of you keep in good health.

Yours---

Esther Morse.

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Kachek, Hainan
February 7, 1931

Dear Ruth:

Your good letter of Dec. 20 and Dec. 26 has been in my hands a few days. Have had an envelope addressed and the paper laid out to write several times--but still I've not been at it--so here goes--'tis Saturday AM and while I could--and should--study I'm going to do some things I'd rather do first. And first of all is this letter to you.

Your last comment I'll answer first--I've written to Dad a quite complete account of the trouble here in late November and December--and you'll no doubt get that account in due season. Many people--chiefly Chinese--were thoroly frightened but the foreigners were not at all in danger. As I see it, the foreigners stand in but little danger as long as they exercise reasonable precaution about going out alone, or after dark, or into strange places. But I've written to Dad at some length on this subject.

Your gifts to others seem mighty nice to me and I think your own gifts are nice, too. Wish I could have added one to the list. I've just learned of a way I could send things home without your paying the duty but now I haven't any gifts to send! Mr. and Mrs Melrose are going home in April and any packages entrusted to them they will take thro' the customs and then mail them to whomever I desire. But I can't possibly get to Hongkong before May or June and so that possibility of getting gifts to you is out of the question!

My subscriptions to magazines have begun to come. The Literary Digest came last week--this week, another issue of

the Digest, the Atlantic Monthly (sent by a nurse I knew at Hurley, now in New York City--Helen Robinson) and two medical magazines. Miss M. got her World's Work and Frenches their Current History so we ought to be able to keep up fairly well with the times (only a month behind!) political and economic views at least. The Presbyterian,Christian Century, Women's Missions, etc. will keep us informed in religious and missionary lines. Next is to find time to read!

I found while Miss M. and the Frenches were out at Hoihow last week that I had lots more time for doing things I wanted to do--I read while I ate my meals and wasn't interrupted in my studying or letter writing, etc.

Had a letter from Dr. Fairchild from Hongkong--was very much surprised that she was in this part of the world. She is en route to India to do eye operative work in several hospitals there--is especially interested in Ruth Hull's work in Chhatarpur and will be there some time. She asked for your address, Dr Johnson in Seattle having told her of your inquiry for her. She wants to write to you and will let you know when she expects to be back in Seattle. I plan to write to her soon too--as she will be in India for quite a while and then will go to Europe before returning to America.

Your suggestion about service in the Philippines and returning home with me in 1935 struck me as a fine one. I'll be glad to hear more from you along that line--it sounds like a feasible and sound proposition.

Guess I'll say Adios for now--must go to the hospital for a little and then should study this AM as we're asked to a feast this P.M. A proud papa is celebrating the feast usually given when a son is a month old--and the mama is a 'grateful patient' --so the hospital force is asked, too!

So Adios-- Love to you--
Yours--
Esther Morse

. . . . . .

Kachek, Hainan
January 18, 1931

Dear Dad:

Your letter of Dec. 11th, arrived on the 14th inst. and was much enjoyed. Am surprised at the closing of the Citizens Bank in Stuart--will it likely reopen? If not, what will the Flanagans do? I fancy it will reopen, don't you?

Am glad your new glasses are proving satisfactory--hope they may eliminate your difficulty entirely. If they do--why hadn't we tho't of them sooner?!?

The weather has moderated a trifle here--the sun shines

occasionally but it is still cool--especially if the wind blows. Woolen clothes are a blessing, sure enough--and one nite Miss M. insisted I wear an outing flannel night-gown of hers so I'd be warm enough--tho' I hadn't needed it thus far--and that same nite she didn't go to sleep 'til after one herself because her feet were cold! We have a pail of hot water bro't to our bathrooms every nite--there is no plumbing in the house--I believe I mentioned. If we have the nerve to bathe--the bathrooms being but enclosed corners of the verandas and the same temperature as the air outside--or colder!--we do so. On the coldest nites I just soaked my feet to be sure they'd be warm--on other nites I'd do my 'daily dozen' over several times 'til I had almost worked up a sweat and then pop into the tub--soak a minute or two, and out, and into bed. This nite in question Miss M. intended to bathe, but put too much cold water in the tub so the water wasn't even warm enough to get her feet warm. How I laughed at her!

Had a nice letter from Mrs. C. and a note from Nellie this last mail too. Letters came also from A. C., Edna Brehm, Lillian Parker at Flint and Marjorie Losure, whom I'd known at Flint. Then yesterday got a book "Green Pastures" from three girls at Flint and a lovely leather writing portfolio from the Esther Morse Class of the Second Presbyterian Sunday School of Oil City. I was no end surprised and pleased--had not tho't of such a thing.

Think I told you I was making a map of the island to send the Oil City Sunday School Finally got it finished and mailed it yesterday. I hope I can manage to send interesting letters to them and to keep them interested and glad they are supporting me.

Have been discouraged about language study for almost two weeks but am beginning to get out of the dumps now. Thank the Lord my teacher has a sense of humor! I think he sensed my despondency for he has been more sprightly and funny than I've ever known him to be. And he has joked and teased me about not knowing words--insisting that I know enough now to get along were there no foreigners here, etc. etc. And I've been tempted to tell him he's a cheerful liar!--but of course, I don't.

Today is my day to hold the foreign service and deliver the sermon! I found a sermon in the Presbyterian Banner for Sept. 30, 1930 that I think I will use. The Scripture lesson is Mark 14: 3-7. I'm not very fond of this sermon-reading but am in no position to prepare an actual sermon--and who am I to sermonize to ordained men and to workers out here for 15 years? It did me some good to select this sermon for I read some 6 or 8 before I found one I tho't I'd care to read--so whether anyone else profits--I have, and will.

A. C., I had several, and repeated good laughs out of your letter will answer ere long. Wonder what Polly thinks of Paul Bunyan now? I found that Miss M. had never heard of him either so I proceded to educate her!

Must say Adios and work on the service for this PM. All my love to you. Yours, Esther Morse